

Media Release

The Blackrock Redemption – offering jobs and hope to former inmates

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Images for download available [here](#).

First Nations business Blackrock Industries is helping former inmates' transition back into the workforce by providing real jobs and hope through its Second Chance for Change program. The initiative which supports men leaving prison with mentorship, skills training and job opportunities has seen more than 200 participants assisted through the program since 2016.

Founded by proud Kamilaroi man and entrepreneur Steve Fordham, Blackrock Industries provides services to the mining and civil construction sectors including environmental services, earthworks, site preparation, workforce and equipment hire.

According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander prisoners account for around 36 per cent of all prisoners and around 76 per cent have experienced prior adult imprisonment.

Eligible participants are offered both pre-and post-employment servicing, training and mentoring resulting in the overwhelming majority not reoffending but commencing new lives dedicated to family and community.

The Blackrock Industries founder knows what it's like to hit rock bottom. There was a time where depression saw him consider taking his own life.

In that moment Steve realised something that would shape everything that followed – that no one was coming to save him, only himself. And from that day forward, it was never about handouts, only hand ups.

That mindset set him on a journey.

Blackrock Industries commenced in 2016 as a labour hire company with around \$20,000 in start-up capital, a tipper truck and two workers in Muswellbrook, New South Wales. Providing specialist engineering and skilled professionals, the business grew rapidly, quickly becoming a sustainable and profitable company, grossing \$2 million in its first 12 months.

Ten years later, Blackrock has more than 17 major contract sites delivering projects across Australia.

In 2025, Steve was awarded the Sam Tjengala Reuben Award recognising Young Entrepreneur of the Year at Supply Nation's Supplier Diversity Awards.

Blackrock Industries Founder and Managing Director Steve Fordham said:

“I think when you're rock bottom, the biggest thing is, there's only one way up. I gave myself some extra time to see if I could do it; make a difference, set clear targets and reach them.

“I think we've got one of the greatest prison program initiatives in the country and it's recognised as working. I've had many people come out and visit me and they want to work out how we're doing it. And within a couple of days, they realise – it's common sense. You are providing an opportunity, genuine employment, giving these men a second chance.

“Giving it a go and having purpose, that's what it's all about. Its purpose that makes us a great nation and makes our people better, but when you don't have purpose... you've got nothing.

“I think one of the biggest things we lost was opportunity and purpose and that's the biggest thing that's been taken away from us. That's what I want to give back to as many people as I can.”

Supply Nation CEO Kate Russell said:

“We shouldn't expect Indigenous-owned businesses to give back anymore that we would any other business, but the reality is they do. Blackrock is a great example of a successful business driven to achieve a greater standard of living for its employees but at its core it also has clear purpose and a desire to achieve positive social outcomes.

“Indigenous businesses like Blackrock are creating positive economic and social impact in communities across Australia that is making a real difference and this needs to be recognised by policy makers so that we build on that momentum and maximise their success for the benefits of all Australians.”

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